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## NOTES AND NEWS.

THE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY has published Water-Supply Papers, Nos. 35 to 39, giving results of measurements of rivers and observations of height.

No. 35 is devoted to the rivers flowing into the Atlantic, from Maine to Virginia.

No. 36 to the rivers flowing into the Atlantic, south of Virginia.

No. 37 to the rivers flowing from the eastern Rocky Mountain area.

No. 38 to the rivers tributary to the Colorado, the Interior Basin and the Columbia River.

No. 39 to the California rivers, and to the rating tables for various river stations described in Nos. 35 to 39, inclusive.

Application for the Papers should be made to Members of Congress, or to the Director of the U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D. C.

IT IS ANNOUNCED that the first meeting of the International Seismological Society, formed in accordance with a decision of the Seventh International Geographical Congress, will be held at Strassburg, April 11, 1901.

MR. MARSHALL H. SAVILLE, of the American Museum of Natural History, will start for Mexico early in November to continue the excavations begun two years ago in the State of Oaxaca, and increase, so far as possible, the collections illustrating the culture of the Zapotecs.

THE LONDON *Athenæum*, of September 22, prints the following communication on the subject of the Hereford Map:

The recent attacks on the authorities for neglect of this interesting map are undeserved, and the defence of the Dean complete. I have this week carefully inspected it, from the Holy Trinity at the top to the mermaid in the centre and thence to the devil at the bottom, *viâ* two Babylons, London and Salzburg. It is in perfect preservation and well watched over.—READER.

THE EDITION of the Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents in the original texts, with English translations and notes, begun by the Burrows Brothers Company in 1896, is practically finished, as appears by the following announcement on page 17 of Vol. LXX:

Vol. LXXI will contain the remainder of the text of our series. The Index will occupy Vols. LXXII and LXXIII.

The publishers are to be congratulated on the completion of a worthy enterprise.

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT of the Division of Forestry (U. S. Department of Agriculture) on the Big Trees of California, there are ten groups of these scattered along the west side of the Sierra Nevada, from the middle fork of the American River to the head of Deer Creek, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles.

The finest of all, the Calaveras Grove, with the biggest and tallest trees, came in April last into the possession of a lumberman, and the Mariposa Grove is the only one which can be regarded as safe from destruction.

The Report discusses the age of the Big Trees, and seems to find no difficulty in admitting that they have stood for five thousand years.

A writer in *Science* (Oct. 12, 1900) states that he once counted with much care the rings of growth of a tree which was felled in 1853.\* The count was made from circumference to centre, and every ring was counted, no guess being made. There were 1147 rings, and the writer concludes that the tree was eleven hundred and forty-seven years old. He doubts—and with reason—whether any one of the existing Big Trees approaches the age of two thousand years.

Great antiquity has been ascribed to many trees—to the dragon-tree of Orotava,† the great chestnut on Mount Etna, the cedars of Lebanon, the Tasmanian eucalyptus, the baobabs of Senegal—but the estimate in every case is matter of conjecture. So far as historical records show, the oldest tree in the world is the famous Bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) of Anuradhapura, in Ceylon. This was a branch of the tree under which Sakya-Muni became a Buddha, brought to Ceylon and planted there in the year 288 B.C. Sir J. Emerson Tennent cites, in his work on Ceylon, twenty-five texts which trace the biography of this sacred tree from the year of its planting down to the year 1739.

In a recent communication to the Académie Royale de Belgique,

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\* This tree belonged to the Calaveras Grove, and its stump forms the floor of the so-called dancing pavilion. Its circumference is ninety-two feet, and the tree was three hundred feet in height.—(Hittel's *Resources of California*, p. 82.)

† This tree, which Humboldt regarded a hundred years ago as one of the oldest organisms on the globe, was nearly destroyed by a hurricane in 1868, and has since perished.

M. Jules Leclercq recounts the history and describes *de visu* the present condition of the bo tree. Its branches spread beyond the enclosure in which it stands and are supported by solid props, while the trunk is held up by masonry built against it as a kind of pyramid, which is raised higher from century to century. At the base are altars, on which the pilgrims lay their offerings of flowers.

CAPT. JOHN WALL WILSON, the last survivor but one of the Kane Arctic Expedition, died on the 21st of August.

THE BUFFALO SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCES announces the decease, on August the 21st, at the age of seventy-one years, of David F. Day, a charter member of the Society, who served as its President and was for forty years its Botanist and one of its Directors.